

Conan E. Mathews Appointed Dean

The opportunity--and responsibility--of being the second dean of the College of Fine Arts came in 1959 to an experienced college administrator and artist, Conan E. Mathews. A native of Providence, Utah, he had gained an excellent reputation for his work in southern Idaho over a period of 20 years, and had been brought to the campus in 1956 by Pres. Wilkinson as chairman of the Art Department. He had been head of art instruction, dean of the faculty, and acting president during his tenure at Boise College, and his service there had included being president of the Boise Arts Association which provided musical, dramatic, and other artistic presentations for the community. His wife, the former Arminta Hogan, was a trained musician, and became a special instructor in music at B.Y.U.

After three years in the Art Department Prof. Mathews was appointed dean at the age of 54. For the next five years, 1959-64, the dean's office was located adjacent to the Art Department on the third floor of the Education Building on Lower Campus. From it he coordinated a growing college (up from 677 to 1001 in enrollment) whose departments were scattered in 17 different buildings while awaiting construction of the long-awaited Fine Arts Center. Most of this dispersal occurred during his first year, when the Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts was moved from its temporary Speech Center location which needed to be razed in preparation for new construction on the upper campus. The department was then relocated into nine other buildings and converted residences on the periphery of the campus.

In a statement prepared in 1961 Dean Mathews outlined the objectives of the College as they related to those majoring in Fine Arts and to those

majoring in other colleges of the University: ¹⁵

The College of Fine Arts has as its general aim the bringing of academic and professional growth into proper balance. Thus, a degree with a major in Art, Music, or Speech and Dramatic Arts not only represents a strong preparation in the major field, but also represents as much general education as that degree would presuppose if given in any other department of the University. These facts become more significant when considered in light of the fact that in most professional schools the general education requirements for fine arts students are reduced to a minimum.

Moreover, this College has the particular aim of providing opportunities for all students of the University to gain general cultural values; of providing opportunities for students who major or minor in one of the fine arts to acquire a thorough understanding of the arts while developing special skills in selected art fields; and of providing, through close cooperation with the College of Education, prospective teachers possessing techniques of teaching fine arts on all instructional levels.

Planning and Construction of the Fine Arts Center

The most pressing responsibility of the Dean's first five years was to represent the College in working closely with other university officials in the final phases of planning, construction, and occupancy of the Fine Arts Center. This involved frequent sessions with his department heads and faculties, as well as conferences with the Physical Plant director, vice president, President, and the Board of Trustees. A particularly critical adjustment was faced when construction estimates outran projected funding, and certain intended facilities had to be reduced in size.

The campus master plan had reserved a two-acre site for the building which seemed ideal. It was on the east side of a quadrangle bounded by the Abraham O. Smoot Administration Building on the north, the Jesse Knight Business Building on the west, and the J. Reuben Clark Jr. Library (now Harold B. Lee Library) on the south. The Ernest L. Wilkinson Student

¹⁵ Eleven Year Report of the President of B.Y.U., 1961, p. 68.

Center was located just to the southeast, so the Fine Arts Center would have the advantage of being located astride a main axis of student traffic. Parking areas were planned to the east and northeast of the building.

The firm selected to draw architectural plans for the building was William L. Pereira and Associates of Los Angeles, which had recently been honored for its design of the Los Angeles Center for the Fine Arts. It developed a functional and artistic concept for a five-level structure of buff brick and white cast stone which would harmonize with surrounding buildings on the campus. In plan it resembled a wide "E", with the two side sections running east and west and the north-south connecting section forming a central gallery. The first and second levels were underground, providing for theater stages and auxiliary facilities. The other three stories were above ground, with the third level being the floor of the gallery. The gallery was of impressive proportions--65 by 165 feet in floor area and 50 feet high.

The side sections at the north and south were indented at their centers, giving the effect of four wings. The upper three levels on the northwest and northeast were planned for art classrooms and studios, the upper four levels on the southwest for music classrooms, studios, and rehearsal rooms, and the upper four on the southeast for speech and drama offices, classrooms, and laboratories.

Extending to the west and east from the central portion of the main gallery were two major theaters--on the west a 1,451-seat concert hall, and on the east a 612-seat drama theater. In each case the stage was on the building's second level, and the floor sloped upward so that the rear row and audience exit was at the third level. Thus the gallery would serve as a grand foyer for both theaters, as well as for the four wings which stemmed from its corners, and would provide a spacious location for art exhibits.

On the fourth level four open courts separated the theater sections from the outer wings, with these areas designed for decorative plantings. On the west side of the building, which faced a campus quadrangle, a lofty facade of vertical stone fins screened the end of the concert hall area and the two open courts on the west side.

In addition to the two large theaters, the center provided a 436-seat recital hall which would serve also for choral rehearsals, a 280-seat experimental theater, and a 150-seat arena theater. Other facilities included a 20-foot high truck access tunnel to the main theater stages on the second level; art storage rooms; opera workshop; band and orchestra rehearsal and storage rooms; radio and television studios and control rooms; scene shop and wardrobe and property rooms; dressing and make-up rooms; 64 class, seminar, laboratory and studio rooms; 57 music practice rooms; and 26 speech practice cubicles. With 268,286 sq. ft. of floor space, it was one of the most comprehensive centers of its kind ever commissioned by an American university.¹⁶

Construction of the building was begun in June, 1962 and was completed in the fall of 1964. Although not all of the furnishings (including the continental seating for the major theaters) was yet in place, the Center was made available for the opening of the fall semester in September.

Department chairmen associated with the Dean during the building's planning and construction period, 1959-63, were: Art Department, J. Roman Andrus and Richard L. Gunn; Music Department, John R. Malliday and Crawford Gates; Speech and Dramatic Arts Department, Harold I. Hansen and Morris M. Clinger.

¹⁶History of Brigham Young University and the Department of Physical Plant, 1957-71, Vol. 7 Book 1, 1974, p. 47; unpublished, UA.

Expanding the College: The Department of Communications

After consideration of a number of studies and recommendations by faculty members, and discussions with the college deans concerned, Pres. Wilkinson in the summer of 1963 directed the organization of a Department of Communications to be added to the College of Fine Arts. The name of the College was at the same time changed to College of Fine Arts and Communications.

The new department included the entire Department of Journalism, with four faculty members and 30 courses of study, from the College of Humanities and Social Sciences; the Radio and Television area of concentration from the Department of Dramatic Arts, with four faculty members and ten courses of study; and two courses in photography from the Department of Art. (The latter courses had been taught by part-time teachers, and thus no transfer of regular faculty members were involved.)

The Department of Journalism, which had begun in 1933 as a Division and had gained departmental status in 1936, offered undergraduate courses in journalism, broadcast news and advertising, general advertising, press photography, and public relations fields as well as a graduate program leading to the M.A. degree. Dr. Oliver R. Smith, who had been its chairman over a period of 13 years, was appointed head of the new Department of Communications.

Simultaneously with the academic department change, the president announced the formation of an administrative division designated as Communication Services, and assigned to it the supervision of the previously separate units of University Press, Audio-Visual Services, Photo Services, Radio-Television Services, and Motion Picture

Production. Of these service areas, the one in radio and television had previously been supervised by two faculty members in the Radio and Television concentration of the Department of Dramatic Arts, with facilities used jointly for academic instruction and broadcasting and program recording operations. Initially this arrangement was continued between the new Communications Department and the new Broadcast Services unit of the Communication Services Division.¹⁷

In press announcements of the new department, the President was quoted regarding the significance and objectives of the accented academic program:¹⁸

"The explosion of communications media is one of the phenomena of our times," President Wilkinson said. "People today are seldom out of reach of the bombardment of newspapers, magazines, radio, television, billboards, motion pictures, and books. These are the tools in the intense struggle for men's minds, and this struggle extends into our religious, economic, and social life as well as political." * * * "The effective communicator is the key in this industry, and at B.Y.U. we intend to educate the finest writers and producers of all kinds with proper attitudes as well as skills," President Wilkinson said.

The announcement added that the courses in mass communication were being regrouped into the College of Fine Arts in order to strengthen them, and because the communication media employ the skills of the artist, actor, speaker, and writer.

In the fall semester of 1962-63 the undergraduate majors in the Journalism Department totalled 83. As the new Communications Department began in the fall of 1963 it enrolled 120 majors, a total embracing the previous majors in journalism and those formerly in the radio-television area of the Dramatic Arts Department, plus freshmen and other students

¹⁷ Author's interview with Norman C. Tarbox, Sep. 9, 1974.

¹⁸ "BYU Tells of College Just Formed," Daily Universe, July 30, 1963.

attracted to the new program. By the end of its fourth year, 1966-67, the new department had nearly quadrupled in size to 459 majors, and had surpassed the other departments in the College in both the number of majors enrolled and in the number of baccalaureate degrees awarded during the year--95.¹⁹

Another departmental change had occurred in the College in 1961 when approval was sought and received by the Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts, then with 24 faculty members, to be divided into two departments: Dramatic Arts, with a faculty of 13, and Speech, with a faculty of 11. Dr. Harold I. Hansen, who had been chairman since 1952, was continued as head of the new Dramatic Arts Department, and Morris M. Clinger, assistant professor, became head of the new Speech Department. The two departments worked closely together, particularly in the area of preparing students for teaching in secondary schools. Their separate status continued for six years, after which they were recombined as the Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts in the fall of 1967 with Dr. Lael J. Woodbury, professor, as chairman.

The departmental division in 1961 and the Communications Department addition in 1963 posed some problems in allocating space in the new Fine Arts Center. Its plans provided three similar office clusters to serve as department headquarters on the fifth level of the building, located at three corners of the central gallery area. Art was to use the cluster next to the northwest, or "A" wing; Music the cluster next to the southwest, or "E" wing; and Speech and Dramatic Arts the cluster next to the southeast, or "F" wing. (A smaller cluster adjacent to the northeast, or "B" wing, was assigned to four Art Department faculty members because relatively fewer office spaces were located in the "A" and "B" wings

¹⁹ Communications Department records, UA 560.

than in the other two.)

After their division occurred, it was planned that the Dramatic Arts Department be assigned to occupy the southeast cluster, and the Speech Department to occupy a pair of large faculty offices at the far end of the southeast ("F") wing, also on the fifth level. This arrangement was implemented when the departments moved into the building in 1964, and was continued until the two were recombined in 1967. Special offices to serve the Speech Clinic and its faculty personnel were located on the fourth and third levels of the "F", and were not changed by the department headquarters shifts.

A more difficult problem that was faced after the assignment of the Communications Department to the College was the provision of a department office, faculty offices, and teaching facilities. For the first two years, 1964-66, the department chairman and secretaries were assigned to three small offices near the Speech Department office on the fifth level of the "F" wing. For the next five years, 1966-71, a 400-sq. ft. classroom (F506) at the south end of the fifth-level gallery was used as a temporary office for the department, with a partition dividing the room into two parts for the chairman and secretary-reception area. An exchange of faculty offices was then made with the Art Department, and the Communications Department moved into the small office cluster at the northeast corner of the gallery.

Individual offices were available initially in the building to house all of the faculty members of the new department, as well as those of the three original departments. One faculty member in Communications, however, remained in an office on the fifth floor of the E. L. Wilkinson student center where he served part-time as adviser to the student publication staffs.

Except for the radio and television part of its curriculum--which had been provided for in plans originally submitted as part of the facilities for Dramatic Arts--the Communications Department was also not provided with any laboratory or auxiliary facilities in the new building. For its collection of newspapers and trade journals, a 200-sq. ft. seminar room was made available next to its department office location in the "F" wing. For its news laboratory it was allocated a cavernous art storage^{room}/on the second level of the "B" wing next to the truck access tunnel, and it was fitted with a chalkboard, surplus theater stage drapes for three walls, and 25 new reporters' desks and a copydesk. This room was used also for advertising classes in the daytime schedule, and for photography studio purposes by evening classes. The air ducts and fans in this large room were so noisy, however, that the space proved unsuitable, but it was more than three years before proper facilities could be built elsewhere in the building for news and advertising laboratories.

For photo processing work the department was obliged to restrict its classes to an evening schedule in order to continue sharing facilities with the Physics Department in another building for eight more years.